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Message Text

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44
ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CU-04 AID-20 CIAE-00 COME-00

EB-11 FRB-02 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 XMB-07

OPIC-12 SPC-03 CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 L-03 NSC-07 PA-04 PRS-01 SS-20 USIA-15

DRC-01 AGR-20 /205 W
---------- 067333
R 221715Z MAR 74
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4881
INFO USINT ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, GATT, EEC, TS
SUBJ: CRITICAL STATEMENTS BY MINISTER OF ECONOMY
REGARDING EC ASSOCIATION

REF: TUNIS 973

1. SUMMARY. MINISTER OF NATIONAL ECONOMY MADE STATEMENTS TO GROUP OF VISITING FRENCH OFFICIALS CRITICAL OF TUNISIA'S LINKS WITH EC AND OF LACK OF PROGRESS IN NEGOTIATING NEW AGREEMENTS. WHILE ONE PRESS REPORT THAT HE ALSO SAID GOT FAVORS "RECIPORCITY" APPEARS UNFOUNDED, STATEMENT COULD PROVIDE EXCUSE FOR EMBASSY DEMARCHE FOR CLARIFICATION AND FOR RESTATEMENT OF US OPPOSITION TO REVERSE PREFERENCES. END SUMMARY.

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2. IN SPEECH TO VISITING GROUP OF STUDENTS FROM FRENCH

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NATIONAL SCHOOL OF ADMINISTRZTION (ENA) , MINISTER OF
NATIONAL ECONOMY AYARI IS QUOTED BY ONE LOCAL NEWSPAPER
AS SAYING THAT TUNISIA IS ONLY COUNTRY IN AFRICA APPLYING
IN WIDEST SENSE ITS ACCEPTANCE OF PRINCIPLE OF RECIPROCITY
IN RELATIONS WITH EC. BRITISH EMBASSY TAKES THIS
AMBIGUOUS STATEMENT -- WHICH WAS NOT INCLUDED IN
COVERAGE OF AYARI SPEECH BY OTHER PAPERS -- AS SIGN THAT
GOT MAY NOW FAVOR EXTENDING "REVERSE PREFERENCES" TOWARD
EC AND HAS INCLUDD THIS INTERPRETATION IN ITS REPORT OF
AYARI STATEMENT. MINECONOMY ATTACHE DE CABINET, HOWEVER,
WHO ATTENDED MEETING, TOLD EMBOFF THAT AYARI STILL STRONGLY
OPPOSED TO PRINCIPLE OF REVERSE PREFERENCES. HELRECALLS
AYARI HAVING TOLD ENA GROUP THAT TUNISIA WAS ONLY
COUNTRY IN AFRICA IN REGARD TO "SOMETHING TO DO WITH
EC" BUT BELIEVES HE MEANT, IN EFFECT, THAT GOT WAS
SECOND TO NONE IN ITS WILLINGNESS TO BE REASONABLE
IN CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS WITH EC.

3. LOCAL PRESS REPORTS AYARI MADE FOLLOWING ADDTIONAL
COMMENTS TO ENA:

A. TUNISIA PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN POLICY OF "CONTRACT
FOR DEVELOPMENT", WITH EC PROVIDING TECHNOLOGY, TRAINING,
AND DEVELOPMENT FINANCING, RATHER THATN IN TRADE AGREEMENTS.

B. PRESENT AGREEMENTS WITH EC HAVE NOT CORRECTED TUNISIAN
UNFAVORABLE TRADE BALANCE
WITH EC AND WOULD BE REJECTED
BY TUNISIAN PEOPLE IF PUT TO REFERENDUM.

C. DIFFICULTIES ON EXPORTS TO EC BEGIN WITH AGRICULTURAL
PRODUCTS AND, IN CASE OF UK, HAVE INCREASED WITH BRITISH
ENTRY SINCE UK BUYS LESS ORANGES THAN BEFORE ENTRY.

D. GOT WANTS TO END POLICY OF QUOTAS AND CONCENTRATE
ON NEW STRUCTURE OF RELATIONS.

E. GOT PREPARED LOOK FOR ECONOMIC PARTNERS ELSEWHERE
IF PRESENT SITUATION WITH EC IS PERPETUATED.

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4. ATTACHE DE CABINET STRESSED TO EMBOFF THAT AYARI
WARNED ENA GROUP GOT PREPARED TURN TO "OTHERS" IF
EC DOES NOT RECIPORCATE TUNISIA'S "REASONABLENESS".
HE ALSO VOLUNTEERED THAT AYARI TOLD ENA GOT NOT
INTERESTED IN FREE TRADE AREA (FTA) OWITH EC.

5. COMMENT: STRONG AYARI CRITICISM OF EC TIES SEEMS
INCONSITENT WITH ALLEGED WILLINGNESS OFFER "RECIPORCITY"

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AND WE BELIEVE PRESS REPORT DUE TO MISUNDERSTANDING OF AYARI REMARKS. HOWEVER, IF DEPT. STILL CONSIDERING POSSIBLE DEMARCHE AS WAS SUGGESTED STATE 029674, SUCH DEMARCHE COULD BE LINKED TO APPROACH TO GOT FOR CLARIFICATION OF AYARI COMMENT. AYARI STATEMENT OPPOSING FTA IN CONTRAST TO COMMENT BY SPECIAL ADVISOR MINEONOMY BOUSSOFFARA REPORTED PARA 3 REFTEL THAT TUNISIAN FAVORS FTA IN LONG RUN. APPARENT CONTRADICTION, HOWEVER, MAY BE MERELY QUESTION OF TIMING.
SEELYE

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